



Hosea 10-11

Tape #7352
Hosea 10-11
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn to Hosea, chapter ten, as we continue our journey through the word of God. The Lord's indictment against...

Israel [is that it] is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit [But it's,] unto himself: [Now in Isaiah, chapter five, Isaiah was prophesying at the same time as Hosea. They were contemporaries. They both were exercising their prophetic ministries during the same period of time, and Isaiah interestingly enough, also used the symbol of the vine. In chapter five, it says, "Now will I sing to my well beloved, a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. And he fenced it, and he gathered out the stones from it, he planted it with the choicest vine, and he built a tower in the midst of it; and also he made a winepress therein. And he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge I pray you, between me, and my vineyard. What could've been done more to my vineyard, than I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes. Now, go to, and I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will take away the hedge from it, and it will be eaten up. I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down. I will lay it waste, and it shall not be pruned, nor digged, but there shall come upon it briars, and thorns; and I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord is the host of the house of Israel. And the men of Judah, his pleasant plant. And he looked for judgement, but behold, there was oppression. He looked for righteousness, but behold, there was a cry, because of the unrighteousness".

Now, God has a purpose for each of our lives, and for the nation. The purpose of God is that we might bring forth fruit to the Lord. God wants your life to be fruitful. That He might come, and spend time in fellowship and communion with you, just enjoying the fruit of His Spirit in your life. Israel, was a vine that brought forth fruit, but it wasn't for the Lord. It used the benefits that God gave. It took the blessings that God bestowed, and it used it for it's own purposes, rather than God's purposes. It is always wrong for a person to take those talents, those gifts, those capacities that God has given to them, and to use them for their own sake, to use them for their own enrichment, or for their own benefits. What God has given to you, He wants you to use for His glory, and for His purposes, that your life might bring forth fruit to the Lord. So, here is God's complaint against Israel. You remember that Jesus said to the disciples, "I am the true vine, my Father is the husbandman. And every branch in me that bringeth forth fruit, He washes it that it might bring forth more fruit. Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you". Then He said that, "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine. Neither more can you, except you abide in Christ". Then He speaks about the Father's desire, "That you abide in Him, and His words abide in you, that you might bring forth much fruit, and herein is the Father glorified, when you bring forth much fruit". God desires fruit from His vine. You are the branches. God desires that your life be fruitful. God wants to come, and just enjoy the fruit of His vine. He wants to come and just spend time in communion, and fellowship. The fruit of the Spirit is love. He just wants this loving relationship with you. How He desires to just spend quality time with you, as you just pour out your love to Him, and as He just receives that fruit of His Spirit, working in your heart, and in your life.

Now here was Israel, Hosea is saying they are an empty vine, in that they bring forth fruit, but not unto God. They have taken the,] *according to the multitude of his fruit he has increased his altars;* [They took this blessing of God, the fruit that God brought to them. The increase in the land, and they just increased their altars. They, they used the money to erect these fancy altars, but not altars unto God. They were altars unto false gods.] *and they took the goodness of the land* [God had planted them in a fertile land, in a good land. It brought forth abundantly. But they took the goodness], *and they used the profits in order to make*

beautiful images(10:1).

Images of silver and gold, of their little gods. So a complete perverting of God's goodness, and God's blessings, and using them in the worship of other gods, or being turned away from the true and living God, and worshiping other gods. It's sad when a nation is blessed of God, and does not return the fruit unto God, but actually takes their, their riches, takes their wealth, and, and they use those riches, and wealth to create images, altars to other gods. To the gods of pleasure. To the gods of materialism. The nation gets totally caught up into materialism and into pleasures, as they turn away from the true, and the living God. So God said...

Their heart is divided; [There was still the acknowledging of God. There was still the token worship of God. They would declare that they were still servants of the Lord. But, in reality, it was a divided heart. God only had a place, a small place in their lives, but not that whole place that He desires. God wants your love. He wants all of your love. He wants you to love Him first, He wants you to love Him foremost, above everything else. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy might, and with all thy strength." That's the kind of love God wants. "All or", He says, "nothing at all". He doesn't want the divided heart. He doesn't want you to just serve Him on Sundays, and then the rest of the week, serve yourself, or serve your idols, your images, your other goals and ambitions, and drives. But He wants you, and He wants your life to be devoted fully to Him. So, "Their heart is divided";] *and now shall they be found faulty: for he shall break down their altars,* [These things that they had given themselves for, these things that they had sacrificed for, these things that they had spent their money on, their altars. He's gonna break them down.] *these images that they had made, he's gonna destroy them (10:2).*

Every false god, every false idol, will be brought down.

For now they shall say, We have no king, [God is gonna strip them of their kingdom. The nation will go into captivity to the Assyrians. "We have no king",] *because we feared not the Lord;* ["We failed to give God His proper place. We failed to honor God as we should. Because of putting God out, now they are to be put out. "We have no king because we did not fear the Lord;"] *what then should a king do to us?* [The question is, "What is this foreign king gonna do?"] *They have spoken words, swearing falsely* [Again, God's accusation, they have taken a false oath. They made a covenant with God, when God established the law through Moses, God made a covenant with them, and they accepted that covenant. "If you keep these commandments, and these laws and statutes, that I have given unto you, then I will be your God, and you will be my people, and I will bless you, and I will bless the land, and I will cause it to bring forth abundantly." God goes on with all the blessings that He would bestow upon them, "If you keep this covenant". So they said, "We will do the law, and all that God says. We will obey!". They, they made that covenant with God. They swore to the covenant. They made an oath unto God, "Yes! We will be your people. Yes, we will obey your commandments. Yes we will keep your statutes, and your judgements". But God said that, "They have spoken words, swearing falsely", *in making a covenant:* [It wasn't a true oath, but a false oath. And,] *thus [because of it] judgement springs up as hemlock in the furrows of the field (10:3-4).*

Hemlock of course, is a poisonous plant. As a result of their not keeping this covenant, the fields that were so fertile, and blessed, poisonous plants will begin to grow up. "The hemlock will grow up in the furrows of the field."

The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Bethaven: [Now Bethaven, was the city of Bethel. Bethel means the house of God. This is the place where Abraham stood, when God made a promise to Abraham. He said, "Look to the north, the south, the east, and the west, and as far as you can see, I am going to give all of the land that you can see, to you, and to your seed for ever". God made the promise to Abraham from Bethel. Now, later Jacob, when he was fleeing from his brother Esau, the first night out of Hebron, he made it all the way to Bethel. There is where he had a rock for a pillow. Weary, tired, on the run, he laid down, guilty conscience. These hard pillows and guilty conscience, make for interesting dreams. As he was sleeping, he dreamed, and he saw a ladder that went up to heaven. The Lord standing at the top of the ladder, and the angels ascending and descending on this ladder. When he woke up in the morning, he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place! And I knew it not". Bethel is one of the rockiest, barren places that you can find! There is really nothing to suggest the presence of the Lord from the terrain around Bethel. You know,

you go walking through the Alps, and you see the waterfalls, and the glorious greenery, and the trees, and the snow capped mountains, and there's much to remind you of God. It just sort of tends to worship, when you see these awesome, beautiful scenes. The rushing streams, the waterfalls, you say, "Oh my, God's glorious creation!". But, you get out in a rocky wilderness area, and there's really not much to suggest the presence of God. But God was there. He didn't know it the night before. But in the morning, after his experience, he realized the presence of God. "Truly the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." There, God spoke to Jacob. God told him that he was going to return, and that God would bless him, and that God would prosper him, but He would bring him back. So God sort of made a covenant with Jacob, there at Bethel. Later on, God told Jacob, "Return to Bethel, that place where you met God, that place where you became conscious of God, come back to that place!".

When Jacob was returning, things didn't look good. He had come to the river Jabbok, and he had just had a tiff with his father-in-law. They had drawn sort of a line, and his father-in-law said, "Don't you come back over this line! Or, I'm not gonna be merciful to you!". So the, "no going back", and then he gets word, "Your brother is coming with two hundred armed men to meet you". The last time he saw his brother, his brother said, "I'm going to kill you, you rat. Soon as dad's gone, you're dead!" Now, his brother's coming with two hundred men! So Jacob prayed. What do you do when there's no place to go? Did the right thing, he prayed, but he said, "Lord, the God who met me at Bethel, you told me, if I would come back, you would do well by me". Ha, ha! He's reminding God, you know that, "You promised me! You'd take care of me if I would come back!", but he is returning. Now, Bethel means, the house of God. When, when Jacob had this vision and all, "Truly the Lord is in this place", and he called the name of the place, "Bethel, House of God". For there, he met God, became conscious of the presence of God. But now, the prophet Hosea changes the name. He doesn't call it Bethel House of God, but he calls it here, Bethaven, what is it, I, Bethaven, which is the house of idols. For you see, it was in Bethel that Jeroboam built an altar, and placed there the golden calf, so that the people of Israel could come to worship this golden calf. So he calls it now, Bethaven, the house of idols. So, "because the inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Bethaven", the house of idols. So in the northern kingdom, part of the kingdom in Dan. In the southern part of the kingdom, Bethel, they had set up two altars with golden calves, that they might be the center of the worship of the northern kingdom of Israel." But they are going to fear because of the calves of Bethaven", *for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and the priests thereof that rejoiced on it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it (10:5).*

Where they once gathered to worship, it's going to become desolate.

It shall also be carried unto Assyria for a present to king Jereb: Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel (10:6).

So these golden calves that were the objects of their worship, will be taken and made presents to Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, called here Jereb. Their gods will be carried away to a foreign land.

I think that there's a bit of ironic humor in Laban's declaration to Jacob, after Jacob had, had left with his wives, and children, and Heron pursued after him, and caught up with him. Unknown to Jacob, his wife Rachel, had taken some of her father's little gods, the idols. Laban, when he caught them said, "You know, you, you, you've snuck away with all my grandkids! Didn't even give me a chance to kiss em goodbye! And besides that, you stole my gods!" I think there's a bit of ironic humor, when a man has a god that can be stolen. But, maybe some of you have gods that can be stolen. Maybe that fancy car you're driving has become a god to you. And, it can be stolen. Be careful of those gods that someone can steal! Here, the gods were carried away, gods that can be carried away. That's not a kind of a god you want! So, these calves will be carried unto Assyria, and be given as a present to the king of Assyria.

And as for Samaria, her king is cut off like foam upon the water (10:7).

Now, you see the foam on the wave, and sometimes it'll just, as the wave breaks on the beach, and washes up on the sand, you see the foam, and then as the wave retreats, the foam just sort of dissolves into the sand, it's gone. Thus the king of Samaria, is, is going to be like foam on the water. Just disappearing, dissolving, no longer reigning over the land.

The high places also of idols, the sin of Israel, [In the high places they built these altars, and they put

idols. They usually picked the highest area for their altars, and for their idolatrous worship, and thus you find the prophets always speaking against the high places. Because, the idea, I guess, is getting a little nearer to God, and thus they would pick the highest hills, and put altars, and there they would have idolatrous worship. So these high places, where their idols were. “The sin of Israel.” It was a horrible sin!] *shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come upon their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us (10:8).*

These high places, they’ll say, “Cover us, fall on us!”, because of the destruction and the calamity that is coming upon them.

In Revelation, chapter six, as God’s judgement begins to come upon the earth in the great tribulation, we read that, “The people will call to the mountains to fall on us, and to hide us from the wrath of the Lamb, for the day of His wrath has come, and who shall be able to stand?” So, here the prophecy, these high places, the places where they had gathered in their idolatrous worship, they’ll be calling upon them to, “Cover us, fall on us, hide us from the judgement that has come upon us!” So God said...

O Israel, you have sinned from the days of Gibeah: [Shortly after they came into the land, it is recorded in the book of Judges, the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah were existent in the land of Israel, the village of Gibeah, that belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. A similar incident, much like Lot and the angels in Sodom, took place there in Gibeah. The men of Israel gathered together, incensed over this horrible deed. But the problem was the tribe of Gibeah stood by the evil men, and sought to defend the evil men, rather than turning them over for judgement, they gathered arms to defend them. There was a tremendous civil war, as the tribes of Israel gathered together, and ultimately destroyed the Benjamites. Most of the men of Benjamin were destroyed, and the others determined that they would just let the tribe of Benjamin die. But then they had mercy, and they let, they vowed, “We won’t give our daughters unto the Benjamites”, then they changed that so that the tribe wouldn’t be totally destroyed. But, Gibeah, this place of horrible rebellion against the things and the ways of God.] *there they stood:* [Against God, and against the principles of God.] *and the battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity* [As the other tribes came against these evil men.] *and did not overtake them (10:9).*

God didn’t totally destroy them. He, in His mercy, allowed a few to escape.

It is my desire that I should chastise them; [“Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth.” So God did chastise them.] *and the people shall be gathered against them, when they shall bind themselves in their two furrows (10:10).*

Now just what the “two furrows”, are a reference to, is possibly the, the city of Dan, and the city of Bethel, where they had set up these false idols. Or, it could be both Judah, and Israel, the two nations. But here, God is promising the chastisement that is going to come upon these people.

Ephraim is like a heifer that is taught, and loves to tread out the corn; [Now they would use the heifers to tread out the corn, and it wasn’t a bad job for the heifer, in that they were allowed, they were never to be muzzled. Under the law, you shall not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn. So usually those oxen that treaded out the corn became very fat. Because they were never muzzled, and they could always eat of the corn. So, “Ephraim is like a heifer that is taught, who loves to tread out the corn”,] *but I passed over upon her fair neck: and I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plow, and Jacob shall break his clods (10:11).*

God is speaking really of His mercy to Ephraim, “As a heifer that tread out the corn”, and God would relief, give relief from the yoke. So the Lord then went on with the figure, and He said...

Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you (10:12).

Their hearts had become hardened. God is calling, “Just break up the fallow ground. Plow up that fallow ground. Make it receptive for the seed. You know, you’re in danger of becoming destroyed! You’ve become hard against God, and the things of God. There, there’s no fruit that can come forth from that hardened heart of yours. So break up this fallow ground, this hardened ground! The time has come when you need to sow in righteousness, and reap in mercy. Time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you”.

Surely, we have come to that place in our national life, where we’ve turned our backs upon God and have become hardened to the things of God, nationally. Trying to just sort of push God aside. We are

beginning reap the bitter fruit. We look at what's going on in the United States today. It's time that we seek the Lord, until He come and rain righteousness. Thursday, we'll be gathering for prayer on this regard.

Therefore shall a tumult arise among the people, and all thy fortresses are gonna be spoiled, as Shalman [Which is a short for Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria. "Your fortresses will be destroyed as Shalmaneser",] *spoiled Betharbel* [Now in the first invasion, they came to the northern part of the kingdom, and they took the northern part of the kingdom, as far south as Betharbel, which was in the area of the tribe of Naphtali, and they took all of the area of the upper Galilee, down to the area of the tribe of Naphtali. But they're going to return, they're gonna come, and they're gonna conquer the whole land. The tumult will arise, the fortress will be just spoiled, even as Shalmaneser spoiled Betharbel.] *in the day of battle: and the mother was dashed in pieces with her children (10:14).*

War is such a horrible thing. There are so many horrible atrocities, unthinkable atrocities! I was with Franklin Graham, this past week, and we were having dinner together. He is just come from Bosnia, where the Samaritan's Purse has a relief program going. But he was telling me of some of the horrible atrocities. The atrocities of war.

If you didn't believe in the total depravity of man, you surely would, if you'd hear the stories of what they are doing there! How that the Serbs are raping these young girls. How they were, gang raped, this twelve year old Serbian girl, and then brought her father in, and demanded that he rape her. When he refused to do so, they made him watch as they raped his daughter. When he refused to rape her, they put a gun on the, in his mouth, and blew out the back of his head. Then they brought her older brother in, and made him rape her, and then when he was through, they blew his brains out. I mean you can't imagine people doing that to a fellow human being! But when minds and men are given over to Satan, that which is in one, in one, it's just amazing what a person is capable of doing!

Here, these children, the mothers, with their children were just dashed in pieces. They were bludgeoned to death, by the Assyrians.

And so shall Bethel do unto you because of your great wickedness: [What's happened in the northern part, is gonna happen down here in the southern part. In a morning,] *in the morning shall the king of Israel utterly be cut off (10:15).*

God's judgement, because their failure to bring forth fruit to God, but their turning away from God, and using the blessings of God in their worship of false Gods. Taking the things of God and offering them unto their own gods of pleasure, and lust, and material.

Chapter 11

God said...

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, [There was a beautiful love relationship with God and the children of Israel, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. The people were so excited about God, and their worship of God. So committed that they would write on the bridles of the horses, "Holiness unto the Lord". God said, "When Israel was a child, oh I loved him!"] *and I called my son out of Egypt (11:1).*

Now this is interesting, because Matthew quotes this as a prophecy concerning Jesus. When Jesus was Bethlehem, born in Bethlehem, the angel of the Lord spoke to Joseph, and told him to take the mother and the child, and flee to Egypt, because Herod was going to seek His life. After the visit of the wisemen, when they did not return to Herod, but went home another way, being warned by the Lord. Then the Lord warned Joseph, said, "Take the mother and child, get them down to Egypt, because Herod is going to seek His life". So they remained in Egypt until the death of Herod. Matthew said that the scripture might be fulfilled, which declared that, "He called His Son out of Egypt".

Now it is interesting to me, because as I would read this in its context, in Hosea, I would never think of it as a prophecy concerning Jesus Christ. I would not know that it had a prophetic aspect to it, unless God, by His Holy Spirit, through Matthew, interpreted it as a prophecy of Jesus Christ. I accept that it is, I know that it is, because we have the Holy Spirit's commentary on it. You know really, the best commentary on the bible is the bible itself. Great commentary on the Bible! You learn so much by just, in fact, next week we're gonna have an interesting commentary that will probably explain what's been a puzzle to you for a long

time. Where it speaks about Jacob wrestling with the Lord, and prevailing. How could a man wrestle with God and win? How is it that he prevailed over the angel of the Lord, as he wrestled with him? A real puzzle.

But Hosea, in writing his commentary on the story, gives us insight that we don't have in Genesis. Through the insight that he gives us, we understand how he prevailed! And it, and it gives a whole different light, and a whole different twist to the story, and it, and it gives you understanding of how he prevailed in this conflict with the Lord. So...

As they called them, so they went from them: and they sacrificed unto Baalim, [God called them out of Egypt, but it wasn't long before they were sacrificing, not unto God, but unto Baalim.] and they burned incense to the graven images. I taught Israel also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them (11:2-3).

Now, this is an interesting picture. It is of teaching a child to walk. It used to be that in teaching a child to walk, they would take these cords, and put them under the arms of the child, and, and they would hold the cords that were under the arms of the child, so that the child couldn't fall. In other words, they would, they would help them to walk by these cords that would hold the child up. It was a method of teaching the children to walk.

Now I had another method, I would just hold my little children out with my arms, under their arm pit, and I would just hold them there, and I would let them walk, as I held them, and steadied them. But they would do that with these little cords. Just hold the child, and let them walk, and learn to walk, and balance and so forth with these cords, and let them hang loosely. But they kept the child from falling.

So, "I taught Ephraim also". God was tenderly helping them to walk. "I taught them also to go, taking them by their arms". As they begin to develop, and begin to walk, then you hold them by the arms, and let them walk. But all the while, holding them up. But should they fall, then there is that caressing, that's kissing of the place where they, you know skinned themselves or whatever, and, and, and God said, "I was the one who, I taught them how to walk. I'm the one that healed them when they stumbled. But they didn't really know that I was the one that was watching over, I was the one that was helping them. I was the one that was training them and bringing them along".

God's grace, and God's love is so often unrecognized by man! So often we say, "Oh man! I was so lucky last week! You can't believe how lucky I was! Man this car was coming right after me, and I, I was sure that it was gonna crash into me, and, and I just swerved. Oh! It just went by, I was so lucky!", you know. God says, "You don't know it was me. I'm the one who was watching over you. I'm the one that's taking care of you. I'm the one holding you by the arms, healing you. But you didn't know it".

And I drew them with cords [the cords] of a man, [Now they had different cords for men. They had them for their children. And you've seen perhaps little kids with a harness, and a leash, in the, in the malls? Now, that always looked, we never did that with our children. We probably should've. At least with Chuck junior. Because, when we would get in the store, he would always, he was so independent, he'd just roam away. We'd say, "Now stay near us", and when we'd get real occupied looking at something that we were looking for, looking to buy something, when we would get real occupied, he'd take off! He learned that they would give them candy and all, when they got lost. He'd go up and say, "I'm lost! I don't know where my daddy and mommy are", and they'd take him to the office and give him candy and all, and treat him nice. So, we'd look around and we'd say, "Where's Chuck!", you know and then we hear, "We have a little boy in the office and he's about three years old", you know, and, and we'd go get him. But we probably should've had a harness and a leash for him, but the, it, it was what they would use with their children.

These little leash kind of things, cords. They were not the same kinds of cords that they would use for the animals. They had a whole, wholly different kind for animals. But, but for the children, the idea was that of tenderness, of care, of, of watching over to keep them safe. "And so I drew them with the cords of a man",] *with the bands of love*: [God draws you with His love. He wants you to respond to His love. That is the constraining power that God uses in drawing you. "For the love of Christ constrains us." So, "I drew them with these cords of love". "I have loved thee", the Lord said, "with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, have I drawn thee". Drawn to Him by love, what a glorious thing! "Drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love",] *and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat*

unto them (11:4).

“I was to them as one who lifted the heavy yoke from off of them. One who set the food out before them.”

He shall not return into the land of Egypt, [Now they had gone down to Egypt with an alliance for help. They had sought to the Egyptians to help them against the Assyrians. Yet, they were told not to do that.] *but the Assyrian shall surely be his king, because they have refused to return to God (11:5).*

God called them, even in this state of idolatry, advanced state of wickedness, God was still extending His arms of love, seeking to draw them with the cords of love, back to Himself. But they refused to return. Thus the Assyrian king will rule over them.

And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour them, because of their own counsels. [Not seeking the counsel of God, but seeking the help and counsel of men, and thus destruction is their destiny.] *And my people are bent on backsliding* [They just will not return to God, but are going away from God. “They are bent to backsliding”,] *from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him (11:6-7).*

God called unto them, but they wouldn’t exalt God, they wouldn’t hearken to God. Their only hope, and yet they wouldn’t turn to Him. They were abdurant in their position of turning away from God. So here is God’s lament, and we find these several times in the bible. Where God just grieves, and as Jesus, looking at the city of Jerusalem, wept over it, because of the destruction that was going to come, because of the path that they had chosen. As He wept, He said, “If you only knew the things that you could have, the blessings, the peace, but it’s hid from your eyes, and as the result, destruction is gonna come. The city is going to be encircled by the Romans, and then they’re gonna come in, they’re gonna dash your children in the streets, and they’re gonna destroy this city”. And, He was weeping. Now, here God is lamenting over the judgement that is coming upon Ephraim.

How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? [In spite of the wickedness of Ephraim. God said, “Ephraim is joined to her idols. Let her alone”. Still He weeps, still He laments, “How shall I give thee up?” Oh the stubborn love of God! Just doesn’t want to let you go! You may go your own independent way, you may rebel against God, you may be bringing destruction upon yourself, because of what you are engaging in. God just laments. He weeps, He said, “How can I give you up?”, and He keeps reaching out. Keeps drawing you, or seeks to draw you by love.] *how shall I deliver you, Israel?* [“How can I deliver you over to this judgement?”] *how shall I make thee as Admah? and how shall I set thee as Zeboim?* [Now, Admah and Zeboim. You remember when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone? Admah, and Zeboim were neighboring cities that were also destroyed by the same fire and brimstone that fell in that valley, and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. It also destroyed these two cities. So God declares, “How can I make thee like Admah, and Zeboim?”] *my heart is turned within me,* [God, in His heart is still yearning for them, wanting to help them, wanting to deliver them.] *my repentings are kindled together (11:8).*

God just is, is wanting so much to forgive, He delights in mercy, He is slow in judgement. He gives you every opportunity to turn! You know the hardest place to get into is hell. It’s not easy to go to hell. You’ve got to fight all the way! You’ve gotta fight against God, you’ve got to do despite to the spirit of grace, you gotta trodden under foot the Son of God. You’ve got to walk over Jesus, to get to hell. He lies in the path. You can get there if you’re stubborn enough, and stupid enough, you can make it. But, God will do everything to keep you from it.

Here He is with Ephraim. They’re on the path to destruction. “How can I give you up? How can I let you be destroyed?” God’s stubborn love. Even at that, though they have set themselves against the Lord, He said...

I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, [“I won’t, I’m not gonna utterly destroy.”] *I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God,* [“I can do what I please”, is more or less what He is saying! “And if I want to be merciful, I can be merciful. I’m God! Who’s gonna challenge me?” I love it! When God can’t do anything else, He retreats in the fact, “Well I’m God, I’ll do what I please. I’ll have mercy upon whom I will have mercy!”] *I am God, and not a man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city (11:9).*

That is, to utterly destroy. “The Holy One in the midst of thee.” The Lord our God in the midst of thee. It’s awesome to realize that the Lord our God is in the midst of us tonight. Jesus said, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them”. “I am the Lord thy God in the midst of thee.”

They shall walk after the Lord: he shall roar [This is the future now. The Lord never leaves you in that, you know, you’re gonna be taken as captives to Assyria, you’re gonna be, you know, lose your king, you’re gonna be servants to the king of Assyria. Darkness, blackness lies ahead. But, beyond that darkness, the day is coming, “When they shall walk after the Lord: and He shall roar”,] *like a lion: and when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west (11:10).*

Now, Revelation, chapter ten, as it describes this great angel, coming to the earth, setting one foot upon the land, and one foot upon the sea, having an open scroll in his hand, and declaring, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ”, it said. “And He shall roar like a lion”. That’s when the fulfillment of this prophecy will take place. You can find this fulfillment in Revelation, chapter ten. “Roaring as a lion.” We’ll get that when we get to Joel, chapter three, verse sixteen. Again this, “Roaring as a lion”. When Jesus comes, “He’s gonna roar like a lion”. The triumph! King of the beast, the King of the world, King of the universe! Power! Coming with authority, roaring like a lion, declaring, “The kingdoms of this world, have now become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ!” When He roars, western Europe, and the western empires are gonna tremble.

They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the Lord (11:11).

God will bring them back, and still accomplish His purposes of love. Because God’s purposes are unchanging.

Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints (11:12).

Ephraim and Israel are about to fall. Judah, at this point under king Hezekiah, is still faithful. But unfortunately, when Hezekiah dies, and his son Manasseh takes over, Judah is gonna follow in the same steps of her treacherous sister, Israel. The judgement that came upon Israel, will ultimately come upon Judah also, as they follow the same path.

But again, the thing that really touches my heart, is God’s unwillingness to let them go. His stubborn love, where He continues to reach out, and He continues to call them, “My people”. Oh, how I love God, and how I thank Him for His hand of mercy, that is constantly extended. All He asks is that you repent, all He asks is that you turn! He just wants you to give Him an excuse to forgive you, and to love you, and to bless you. He was still holding out to Israel, opportunities for forgiveness, mercy and blessing, as He does to us tonight.

“There’s none righteous, no, not one. We’ve all sinned, and come short of the glory of God. If we say we have no sin, we’re only deceiving ourselves. The truth isn’t in us. But if we confess our sins, He’s faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” God is reaching out to you tonight. No matter what your condition may be, how messed up your life might be, how bound you might be in your sinful practices, still God loves you. Reaching out to you, and all He wants is you to just turn, so that He can show His mercy, His forgiveness. God help us to turn our hearts and lives towards Him, that His mercy might be showered upon us, because of His love that just doesn’t quit! Shall we pray?

Father thank You for these lessons, that we can learn from history, of Your dealing with Your people. Of Your unfailing love, in spite of their failures. Of Your reluctance to let them go. Of Your continual seeking to draw them unto the best, and the highest. Lord, may our lives bring forth fruit to You. Fruit of righteousness Lord. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

Shall we stand? I think of that song, “Oh love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee. I give thee back the life I owe.” God’s unfailing love. I’m so glad He loves me. I’m so glad that He continues to reach out, to wash, to pardon, to cleanse, to make us, all He would have us to be.

If you need prayer tonight, if you would like to receive God’s love, and God’s forgiveness, if you desire the work of God’s Spirit within your life, I would encourage you, go back to the prayer room, as soon as

we're dismissed and the elders will be back there to pray for you, whatever your need might be. If you desire to just spend some time with the Lord, maybe just rededicating, and consecrating your life anew, maybe you've been guilty of a divided heart, and you desire to just commit yourself again, fully, unto the Lord. Getting rid of those idols in your life. I would encourage you to go over to the fellowship hall, where a group will be gathering to just wait upon God, and the work of His Holy Spirit in their lives.

May the Lord be with you, bless you, keep you, watch over you, fill you with His Spirit, and with His love, and guide you in His path this week. In Jesus' name.